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Requests

Heyo! So, I know that a bunch of you have requests for certain one-shots you're interested in! Well, instead of commenting them on an already written one, you can do it here! This way, we can see all the requests you guys have for us so we don't have to jump chapters and seek out what couples you want to see written.

So, have fun! (P.S: Please, no lemons, otherwise, feel free to comment on what you want to see below)

Thanks again for reading!

1. Raven x Barley

Let's kickstart this book with a one-shot of Ravenpaw and Barley, ey? Enjoy!

Ravenpaw sprinted through WindClan territory. There was one thing to be glad about with this weather, and that was the very unlikely chance that any WindClan cat would see him. Rain poured. Lightning struck. All of LionClan and TigerClan seemed to be battling above. The moorland was muddy, splashing up as Ravenpaw ran. It even made him slip a few times, but he couldn't stop; he just needed to get to Barley's place.

As the occasional lightning strike lit up the wide hills, he concentrated on remembering where to go. Ravenpaw was sure he knew the way, but with all the rain and darkness, he couldn't help but doubt himself.

Soon, the black-furred tom spotted a barn near twolegplace and sprinted towards it. He stopped and shivered at the entrance that provided little cover from the storm. After a few heartbeats, lightning flashed again and it gave him just enough light to see the figure of a cat laying inside. He took a deep breath before his exhausted voice called out, "Um, Barley? I-is that you in there?"

There was some shuffling that could just be heard over the rain and thunder. Barley called back, "Who's there? Come in! Whoever you are you must be soaked to the bone!"

Ravenpaw hesitantly stepped inside, and Barley made his way over. "It's um, Ravenpaw. Of ThunderClan." He then mumbled, "Well, used to be."

Barley didn't seem to hear the last part. "ThunderClan? What are you doing here, then? And in this weather! Surely ThunderClan isn't in trouble?"

"Can-can I stay here? I-I caught an adder once!" Ravenpaw blurted out. It sounded so much better when Graypaw had said it. *Graypaw . . .* Ravenpaw thought and shook himself.

"What?" Barley asked, clearly taken back.

Ravenpaw cleared his throat and tried again. "Can I please stay here with you? I can't live in ThunderClan anymore. I-I didn't know where else to go."

There were a few heartbeats of silence, and Ravenpaw wasn't sure if Barley was contemplating or merely curious as to why he could no longer stay in his home. Lightning flashed again. He could make out Barley's white pelt contrasted against his black spots and the darkness of the barn.

"Of course!" Barley chirped at last. "The more company the better. How about we get you cleaned up, eh? I can smell the mud all over you." He felt a tail on his shoulder and flinched in surprise before allowing himself to be lead deeper into the barn.

"Th-thank you, Barley," Ravenpaw said softly. He felt both apprehensive and grateful about the whole situation. Could he really live here with him?

"It's really no problem," Barley replied and guided him to a small mound of hay. "You can stay as long as you like."

Ravenpaw hesitated slightly before settling down in it, and when he did he let out a soft purr. Who knew hay was so warm and comfortable? He felt movement beside him and heard Barley chuckle. Was Barley sitting next to him? After a moment, Ravenpaw began to groom the mud off of his fur. The moor must have been muddier than he had imagined, because he was *covered!*

"Would you like some help getting all that mud off you?" Barley asked after a while. He didn't sound like he was trying to be rude, but Ravenpaw's ears still flattened in embarrassment.

"Sure erm thank you," Ravenpaw replied, right before he felt Barley's tongue against his pelt in all the hard-to-reach places. He

held back a purr, busying himself with his grooming.

Ravenpaw soon finished grooming himself in all the places he could reach, but apparently Barley hadn't. He still felt the other tom's tongue against his pelt, and after a while, Ravenpaw allowed himself to rest his head on his paws. He closed his eyes for a second, and before he knew it he was asleep.

Ravenpaw awoke to the sun in his face. He turned his head and looked at his surroundings through squinted eyes. He jumped up with a start. This wasn't the apprentices' den! Where were Firepaw, Graypaw, and . . . And then it hit him--all of last night's events up until he had fallen asleep.

I fell asleep! Ravenpaw groaned inwardly. *How could I do that? What does Barley think of me now?* Wait, where was Barley? Ravenpaw looked around the whole barn, but he was nowhere in sight. Sighing, Ravenpaw sat back down in the hay. Maybe he went to go make dirt or something?

After several heartbeats went by, the black-and-white tomcat padded into the barn. Upon seeing that Ravenpaw was awake, he perked his ears and set two rats down at his paws. "I figured you might be hungry when you woke up, so I brought you these," Barley said.

Ravenpaw flattened his ears once again in embarrassment. "Oh, thank you! But you didn't have to do that."

Barley shrugged and settled down into the hay. "It's no big deal." He took a bite out of one of the rats as Ravenpaw crouched down and slowly took a bite of his own. They ate in silence; Ravenpaw wasn't really sure what to talk about. He knew Barley had probably just been polite so far. He also must be curious about why he had left ThunderClan. From what he had seen, it wasn't like Barley not to ask questions. He had bombarded Bluestar with questions about ThunderClan not too long ago. What made him hold his tongue last night?

"Hey," Barley started, breaking the silence between them and Ravenpaw's train of thought. "So, like I said last night, you're more than welcome to stay here as long as you like. My barn is your barn. But . . . can I ask why you decided to leave ThunderClan?"

Ravenpaw took a big bite of rat so he didn't have to answer right away. He might as well tell Barley the truth. The friendly tom was offering him a place to stay, after all, and it's not like Tigerclaw could do anything. By now he probably thought Ravenpaw was dead.

But, when he looked up at Barley's expectant gaze, he couldn't bring himself to do it. He didn't want to live in the past; he just wanted to move on from it, to get away. And he couldn't do that with everything out in the open, could he?

"I'd uh rather . . . not talk about it," Ravenpaw replied softly. "I'm sorry, I just, I can't . . ."

After a long moment, Barley replied, "Alright, that's fine. I understand. Just, if you need anything, I'm all ears." He finished up his rat and stood up. "I can show you where all the best hunting places are sometime. Just let me know when you're ready." With that, Barley stood up and padded towards the entrance of the barn and walked out. Ravenpaw stared until he couldn't even see the tip of his tail anymore.

Dew sprinkled the grass all around Ravenpaw, and the smell of rain was in the air. It had showered a few times over the past couple of days, but it was nothing like the previous storm. He slowly made his way towards one of the few hunting spots Barley had showed him. Even with the soggy weather, prey still seemed to be everywhere around here, and it made for easy hunting. He wondered what leaf-bare would be like.

Ravenpaw let out a heavy sigh as he looked back towards the direction of the moorland. He couldn't see much of it, but he knew it was there. And beyond that was the forest, along with his friends. He couldn't call the barn home just yet. Barley had been kind, and

he hadn't spoke of ThunderClan again, it just wasn't the same as the forest.

He shook his head. There was no reason to be thinking about the clan. It hadn't really been his home, either. Not with the rumors Tigerclaw had been spreading. As his frustration suddenly flared, the black-furred tom raked his claws through the damp ground. *Tigerclaw.* How could any cat trust a despicable warrior like him? Sure, he had been scared when he was in ThunderClan, completely susceptible to anything Tigerclaw had planned. But now, away from all of that, he felt the blood pulsing through his veins every time he thought about that...murderer. He was the reason he was driven from his clan. He let out a low growl. *If I wasn't such a coward . . .* he thought.

"What'd the grass ever do to you?" asked a voice from behind him. Ravenpaw to spun around and crouched instinctively. "Whoa, easy there. I didn't mean to startle you. Is everything alright?" Barley questioned.

Ravenpaw looked back down and flattened his ears to his head; he had pulled all the grass from its roots. "I'm, uh, fine. Sorry, I was just--"

"Don't try to come up with an excuse," Barley cut him off. "You're obviously not fine. I may not be a clan cat, but I can tell when something's bothering someone."

Ravenpaw stared at Barley, unsure of what to say. Maybe he had been a little moody lately, and he definitely hadn't been appreciative enough of Barley's kindness. He opened his mouth to say something, but Barley held up his tail.

"I don't want to hear it unless you're about to tell me what's been bothering you." After a heartbeat, he added, more sympathetically, "I know it might be hard. But you can't keep going like this. Trust me."

Ravenpaw stared into Barley's gaze. It was welcoming, sure, but there was something else underneath it and he couldn't figure out what that was. He sighed and sat down, curling his tail over his

paws.

"I suppose you're right," Ravenpaw said after another heartbeat. "You deserve to know." He took a breath and started to explain his endeavors, all the way from the beginning. He told him how he had witnessed the murder of Redtail and Oakheart, how Tigerclaw had covered it up. He explained that Tigerclaw had been hinting at how Ravenpaw was a traitor to his own Clan, when really Tigerclaw was the traitor. He told him how he had to leave the only home that he had ever known, just to get away from Tigerclaw and his lies before something bad happened. All the while, Barley listened in silence, he gaze never wavering from the black tomcat in front of him. When Ravenpaw was done telling his story, they sat in silence for what seemed like all of eternity.

Once Barley began speaking, it wasn't like his usual friendly banter but slow and serious. "I understand the feeling of having to run from your home. I had to once, long ago, and it's never a good experience. But you're here now. You'll move past this, I promise." He rested his tail on Ravenpaw's shoulder. "And I'm here to help you."

Ravenpaw continued to stare into Barley's eyes. He had detected the hidden emotion, which was now all over his broad face: understanding. Ravenpaw couldn't help but feel soothed by his words.

"Thank you, Barley. For everything."

Written by Brook
Edited by Ren, my dudes

2. Trans!Rowanclaw x Tawnypelt

Fear prickled in Rowanclaw's toes. It seemed ridiculous. She knew, in her heart of hearts, that her beloved would accept her for who she was. She would accept her for feeling like a tom inside - right? Tawnypelt was her sunshine on a cloudy day. There was no way she would push Rowanclaw away or tell her she didn't love her any more.

So why was she so scared?

Rowanclaw's paws didn't want to take her over to the spot where her mate slept. Tawnypelt's eyes were closed, a little content smile etched onto her tranquil face. Rowanclaw felt her heart swell with enormous affection and love.

After gazing at her dozing mate for a bit, Rowanclaw reminded herself what she came to do. She took a shaky breath to try and steady her trembling legs.

"Tawnypelt?"

The name fell from her mouth, softly and tentatively as a feather carving its path through the air. It settled softly on its owner, making her eyes crack open and causing her to sit up.

Tawnypelt and Rowanclaw locked eyes. The tortoiseshell warrior's face lit up. She dived forward and nuzzled her mate ferociously, almost bowling her over with the force of it. Rowanclaw couldn't help giggling in spite of herself.

"How's the most beautiful she-cat in all the Clans doing today?" Tawnypelt purred, tail slipping around to twine with Rowanclaw's. Her head went to rest on Rowanclaw's shoulder. Rowanclaw nestled into it, thanking the stars for such an endlessly loving and sweet mate. She took another steadying breath.

"Actually, Tawnypelt, I wanted to talk to you about that," she mewed quietly. Immediately, the air fell stiller than a lake with no wind. Rowanclaw cursed her awkwardness. She should have come out with it there and then.

Tawnypelt blinked. "What's wrong? Don't you love me any more? What's happened? Did I do something?" The hurt and confusion in her voice tugged at Rowanclaw's heart. The smile dropped to a frown. Her eyes were round and glimmering nervously.

Rowanclaw shook her head violently. "No, no, no, no, no! That's not what I meant at all! I just-" She swallowed. The words in her head were running around like frightened mice and she was struggling to pin them down. "Can we go somewhere more private?" she managed to ask.

Tawnypelt relaxed visibly. "Sure. No problem. I can see you need to get something off your chest - and this something is important." Her voice was firm. Rowanclaw tensed. As usual, her very clever and observant mate was right. She nodded.

The pair walked in step to go and sit in their favourite spot: a big rowan tree with its berry-dotted branches reaching out in all directions, shading a snug and cosy nook hollowed out at the base of the trunk just big enough to fit a certain ginger cat and her mate. Rowanclaw led Tawnypelt into this nook. They curled up together, naturally slipping to the positions they always took. There was a gentle, motherly safety to the nook, where all was silent excepting the breathing of the lovers.

Rowanclaw braced herself. It was now or never. "Tawnypelt, what I'm about to say, I want you to take completely seriously. I have thought about this for a really long time," she murmured as Tawnypelt softly stroked her head.

"You can tell me anything. There is nothing in this world you could say that would make me turn away from you. I promise."

The promise tasted sweeter than nectar to Rowanclaw. She closed her eyes and inhaled slowly. StarClan, give me courage. "Tawnypelt, I feel like a tom inside. I always have. I wasn't meant to be a she-

cat. I want to live my life as a tom." The confession rushed out of Rowanclaw's mouth in a frantically gushing waterfall.

Tawnypelt fell silent. Rowanclaw's heart sped up. "So, what you're telling me is you now want to be the most handsome tom in all the Clans? Well, you already are. My incredibly handsome, kind, caring mate who is the best tom any she-cat could wish for." The speckled she-cat gazed adoringly at her mate, then leaned over and rasped her tongue across Rowanclaw's cheek.

Rowanclaw broke into a smile. His heart soared. Delighted purrs rumbled out of his throat. He knew he had been frog-brained to worry, but he couldn't help himself all the same. "I love you, Tawnypelt. I don't know what I'd do without you."

"I love you too, my handsome Rowanclaw."

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written by August

& edited by Mack!

3. Hollyleaf x Cinderheart

Cinderheart stepped forward. Her eyes couldn't believe what they were seeing as she kept on staring. The more she stared, the more she had to keep telling herself this wasn't a dream. She knew she was awake, and this was all real. All the cats who surrounded her saw what she saw, but none of them would ever have the same shock present in her.

As other cats walked off, she forced herself to walk forward. Cinderheart screamed in her mind to not be scared. There was nothing to be scared of, even if she personally felt it. There was no threat. It was just her imaginary. She constantly yelled those two phrases at herself for being so afraid of nothing.

Cinderheart lifted her head, looking forward instead at the ground. The she-cat's gray fur rose up a little as her blue eyes looked up at who she wanted to. She stared at the black-furred she-cat for a couple heartbeats. Cinderheart soon snapped out of it. Staring was weird. She had to say something.

"H-Hollyleaf?" Cinderheart meowed.

The black cat turned her neck to look over at Cinderheart. Her green eyes looked into hers. "Cinderheart?" she meowed back as she stood up.

Cinderheart's heart almost skipped a beat as Hollyleaf said her name. She watched Hollyleaf pad over to her. The gray tabby she-cat kept her joy and excitement to herself. She didn't know if Hollyleaf would remember her, but she knew it was mouse-brained to think so.

Of course she would remember me. She remembers everyone else in ThunderClan after all, Cinderheart thought.

Hollyleaf walked to Cinderheart. "It's good to see you," she purred.

"I thought you were dead. I mean, we all did, but I did too. I just really thought you were gone," the gray she-cat told Hollyleaf.

"Yeah, I also thought I was dead," Hollyleaf responded, half-joking as she spoke.

"Well, I'm glad you're back. I'm *really* glad," Cinderheart purred to Hollyleaf.

Hollyleaf warmly looked at her. Her gaze was full of joy like Cinderheart's was. The two stared at each other with the same type of warmth. While both were awkward to see each other after all this time, the two ThunderClan she-cats were glad to finally be able to stand near each other. The two were together once again.

Hollyleaf and Cinderheart were frozen, not moving. Neither of them spoke. The two cats didn't know what to do or what to say to each other. They only stared at each other with warmth in their eyes for each other. Cinderheart was the first to make a move. She leapt forward, making Hollyleaf flinch in surprise. The gray tabby's paws cupped around Hollyleaf's neck, but it wasn't aggressive at all. Cinderheart's touch was soft on her fur.

"I'm happy you're back, Hollyleaf. I've just been missing you all these moons you were gone," Cinderheart meowed.

Hollyleaf looked over at Cinderheart. She gently nuzzled the she-cat, closing her eyes. "I'm happy to see you too after so long. I've missed you all this time I've been in those tunnels. I'm glad to see you once more."

"I hope it'll stay that way," she muttered as a reply, also closing her blue eyes as the two nuzzled each other.

"I'm sure it will, Cinderheart. I don't plan on going missing or dying anytime soon after all. We'll spend the next moons together," Hollyleaf excitedly told her.

"Promise?"

"Promise."

—

This one-shot has been written by Astral and edited by Mack.

4. Leopardstar x Sasha

Leopardstar stepped forward into RiverClan's nursery. She looked around before seeing Sasha in the corner of the cozy den. Hawkkit and Mothkit were near her, sleeping peacefully. Sasha looked down at her kits, watching them as they rested near her fur. The leader carefully and quietly walked over. She didn't want to disturb the two sleeping kits and wake them up.

"Sasha," Leopardstar called out as softly as she could, walking over to her.

The name simply floated out of her mouth. While she normally would have struggled to say such a kittypet name, she didn't with Sasha's. It was strange. She didn't want to question it though. Sasha was a part of RiverClan. She was no longer a cat outside of the Clans, even if she had a strange name.

Sasha looked up, blinking a couple of times in surprise. As Leopardstar got closer, Sasha's eyes shifted over to her. The golden spotted she-cat sat down next to her. Sasha looked back at her kits making sure they were still asleep before looking back at Leopardstar.

"Oh, hello there, Leopardstar," Sasha purred quietly.

"How are Hawkkit and Mothkit doing?" she questioned. Her amber eyes were quick to dart over at Sasha's two kits.

"They're doing fine actually. Hawkkit and Mothkit are adjusting better than I thought they would. I'm surprised really. I never really thought they would if I have to be honest," she told her.

"That's good," Leopardstar responded.

"I know you didn't just come here for the kits, Leopardstar. I can tell you know. So, why else did you want to come in here?"

Those words stung Leopardstar in place. It was true. She didn't only come for Sasha's kits. She came for another thing. She came because of Sasha. The RiverClan leader was silent for a while. The silence was only interrupted by the queen's quiet chuckle. Leopardstar flinched as she looked at Sasha.

"Why did you come then?" she asked her. The queen looked up at the leader. Her icy blue gaze almost seemed to warm Leopardstar's heart as she stared back with her bright amber eyes.

"Well," Leopard began,"I know you had a past, a strange one from what it seemed like from what I've heard. I also know you won't want to tell everything you have been through and where you came from, including who was your mate, but I just want you to know I'll be around. You're now one of my fellow Clanmates, and if you and your kits need anything, I'll be here."

Sasha's expression went from a joyful one to a serious one. Leopardstar gave her a sheepish smile, not knowing how the cat would react. She wanted to be by Sasha's side even if she always portrayed herself as the tough leader of RiverClan, but whenever she saw her enter the camp, she softened up a bit in a way she never thought she would.

Leopardstar never thought she wanted a mate. She didn't like any toms or she-cats she looked at in RiverClan. There wasn't a cat who she liked at all. She only ever saw them as a Clanmate and friend, and that was it. She simply saw her future being mateless, but after seeing Sasha, those love feelings all went into her chest. It seemed like a dream with how things went down inside of her mind. Sasha just seemed *so* perfect, the more she interacted with her.

"Oh, Leopardstar, just letting me join RiverClan is good enough," Sasha stated.

"I know, Sasha. I also know this may sound weird to you, but ever since I laid my eyes on you, I knew you were worthy of joining. In fact, you seemed like much more than everyone else saw you as. I'm always here for you and your kits. I'll take care of them along side you if you don't mind. I just don't want to let you raise your kits alone."

Sasha's eyes seemed to completely light up as Leopardstar spoke. It almost looked like what the RiverClan leader said was what Sasha needed. Her gaze drifted down at Hawkkit and Mothkit as they huddled together, sleeping. With a suddenly new surrounding to them and a mother who knew nothing, there would need a cat who could show them around as they grow up. Sasha looked back up at Leopardstar.

"I would love to raise my kits with you by my side. To be honest, their father, well, he wouldn't have been good anyways, but someone like you would surely be loved by Hawkkit and Mothkit," she meowed.

"If you don't mind telling me, what was their father like?"

"He was . . . different than most other cats I've seen and heard from. I used to think he would have been a good father to Hawkkit and Mothkit, but, well, we're wrong about some cats I suppose. Cats aren't always the same after we know them for a while," Sasha began.

Leopardstar knew how she felt like. She once knew a tomcat who at first she thought was doing the right thing and was good, but she ended up being wrong and had to face that fact after she learned. He went by the name of Tigerstar. Leopardstar allowed her Clan to join forces with his due to the fact she thought he would make her Clan stronger than before. She was wrong about what his plan was.

Tigerstar wanted power for himself. He didn't care for her or RiverClan. In the end, Tigerstar showed himself to be a terrible cat. While she guessed her situation was more extreme, she did sympathize with Sasha and what she went through with the kits' father. Leopardstar couldn't possibly imagine what Sasha's mate could have been or what he might have been like.

"But you can always be like their second parent. Right?" Sasha questioned.

Leopardstar froze a little. She never felt like she could be a mother to any kit. Leopardstar didn't think this scenario would come, but here it was now. She had the chance to see how it was like to raise

her own kits with a cat she liked. Leopardstar looked over at Sasha. She could see the brightness in her eyes, ready to hear what the leader would say. Leopardstar smiled warmly at Sasha, as she nodded.

Written by Astral, Edited by Mack

5. Leafpool x Mothwing

The border had become her solace. It was the only place where she felt as though she was away from the prying, harsh, deadly and laser-sharp eyes of her Clanmates, the same loving, considerate, and pleasant Clanmates that had trusted her so greatly - with their lives, with their kits' lives, with... everyone.

And she had betrayed them.

No, Hawkfrost did.

I *did.*

Many cats within her Clan had been outraged at the actions of the dark brown tabby, particularly some of the apprentices who had looked up to the strong-minded warrior. She felt as though she had betrayed her Clan by not saying anything all those moons ago, back when Hawkfrost had planted the fake sign in front of her former mentor's den.

And the awful one about Stormfur and Brook- at the thought of it, her lip curled furiously. How had she allowed herself to do such a thing to the poor, undeserving cats? How had she allowed such a thing to occur under *her* acceptance? Sure, Hawkfrost had blackmailed her into it, but she technically had been in control.

Was she sad about her brother's death...? She preferred... not to answer that question. After his death, the medicine cat had thrown herself into her work as if to distract from the reality of the situation. She had gathered more herbs than ever before, organized more often than any time in the past, and trained Willowpaw more often than any normal apprentice trained.

The camp was an uncomfortable place. She felt like she had lied time and time again to her Clanmates. The reality that she didn't believe in StarClan also settled harshly onto her at times, knowing that Leafpool had to receive a dream from her former mentor,

Mudfur. She swallowed heavily, reminded once more of the moth-wing sign.

Her heart skipped a beat and Mothwing shook her head harshly as if to abandon the memories swirling in her head. The dappled golden she-cat bounded swiftly out of the camp, quick to spring over the streams surrounding it. She loved RiverClan's territory, but sometimes it felt foreign like she didn't belong. And, really, her brother's actions only seemed to isolate her further.

As she ran out past the streams, she allowed her pace to lapse into a comfortable dash. Her paws slammed rhythmically against the ground, tail streaming out behind her like a flag. Ears pressing tightly to her skull, she navigated around a few bushes that poked out of the mostly clear landscape.

Eventually, the golden medicine cat came upon the border. Her amber eyes immediately swept across the long and large expanse of the lake. In the sky above lay a blanket of stars, one accented by the darkness of night. The she-cat lay down by the lakeshore, letting her reflection stare back at her with sharp eyes.

Leafpool.

The ThunderClan medicine cat popped into her head and the RiverClanner sat up immediately.

Across the lake lay Leafpool, brown tail curled over her muzzle as if to block out the rest of the noise that seemed to clog her senses. Her amber eyes darted upward to see that it was a few nights, perhaps *the* night, before the Moonpool meeting. Her heart sprung upward yet the she-cat stayed upon the ground.

She disliked being in camp nowadays. It felt strange to be around Brambleclaw, who had saved her father's life when only a few moons or perhaps even halfmoons before she had completely been untrustworthy of the tabby. Perhaps that was why she had been sent the sign of her sister and the tom walking together. To prove he was good.

And she had been comforted by it, of course. StarClan knew best.

But when StarClan failed, what took control? Feelings? Intelligence? She didn't know. StarClan wasn't meant to fail. They were her and everyone else's ancestors, watching carefully over them to ensure that nothing was to go wrong and that everything was to go fine.

However, she knew StarClan had to allow her and others to have some form of decision making or power over their own actions. That caused cats to stray from the idea of StarClan, that someone was guiding them delicately with starry pelts and bright eyes. Though, overall, StarClan appeared to be a favorable thing in the eyes of many.

She had seen StarClan's work and StarClan's power. How did leaders have nine lives? They simply didn't gain them with the title of a leader or the suffix they gained at their ceremony, and if that happened to be the case, couldn't *anyone* have nine lives? No. They simply didn't, and for the reason that they were granted by past cats.

No matter how hard she tried she couldn't keep thinking of the notion that Brambleclaw was next in line for nine lives. Who were to give them? Would she be around to lead him to his ceremony, and ensure that all was well within her ancestors' lives? Would the bond between him and Squirrelflight be even stronger?

Instantly, she was reminded of the WindClan warrior who she had been seeing more and more recently. Crowfeather, his name was, and at the very thought of the dark-furred tom, all sorts of memories, feelings, and emotions bubbled within the medicine cat's mind as if they threatened to burst had she ignored them.

Well, she did. Each and every little thought and emotion was quickly shoved away and out of her mind, pressed into the ground and whisked away till only its memory was left. The memory was easy to get rid of - with a simple huff and shake of her head did it flutter delicately out of her head.

Of course, the thoughts were soon replaced with new ones, quick to absorb her empty mind like a sponge soaking up the salty and gross seawater of an ocean long forgotten by the cats of her time. The she-cat shuffled her position, laying her head even firmer against

her white paws beneath her figure. She inched forward, looking at her face leveling her stare in the lake.

Mothwing.

She sat up with a soft, involuntary gasp as she thought of the RiverClan medicine cat. A strong tugging sensation filled her chest, warm, strong, and immediate. Her amber eyes flicked to where it seemed to be coming from.

Its location was the opposing side of the lake, and in front of her - on the lake's surface - Leafpool thought she could see some... sparkly and bright shimmers, each and every one forming a golden she-cat, one that smelled of fish and of flowers and herbs that had been ingrained into memory for both she-cats.

And, consequently, Mothwing saw the bright figure of a brown tabby with a similar scent, yet it did not carry the fishiness that Leafpool noted. The she-cat on the lake's expanse carried a pleasant airiness about her sleek and slim form, tinged with moss and the lovely forest scent of a ThunderClan cat.

Just wait a night and it'll be the Moonpool trip.

Leafpool thought in a direct sort of way - as if speaking to a cat across the lake - laying her head back on her clean and crisp white paws.

Settling down next to the lake, Mothwing confirmed, to no cat other than the slim brown tabby she-cat who she presumed could hear her, to some degree:

See you then.

Written by Lamb
Edited by Jackal

6. Tallstar x Jake

Consciousness flickered from deep within his slumber as bright murky shapes flitted through Tallstar's closed eyelids. The black-and-white tom stifled a sleepy groan as he forced his head up from his nest and peeled open his eyes. He swung his gaze around the den, taking in the sight of his sleeping mother, Palebird, surrounded by several motionless kits. Beside her, Sandgorse's nest was already vacant.

Tallstar pushed himself to his paws and wandered into the openness of his particular StarClan camp. The sweet scent of wild heather growing on the nearby moor greeted him and he released a small, content sigh.

His attention strayed to the nearby figure of his pale ginger father who was dragging a freshly-killed rabbit into the clearing. Sandgorse soon caught sight of him and released a friendly purr.

"Good morning!" Tallstar called.

Sandgorse acknowledged him with a friendly nod. His amber eyes briefly moved between the prey and his son. "This won't be enough for Palebird and all the kits. Would you like to go hunting with me?"

Tallstar's long tail twitched as he weighed his options. An early morning activity with his father would certainly be a pleasant way to start his day, but he had already promised himself that he would do something else the night before.

"I'd love to," he began, "but I planned on visiting a friend today."

His father eyed him, expression bright. "Jake?"

"Yes," the former leader answered, fighting the urge to coyly duck his head.

But Sandgorse only purred. "Go ahead then; I'm fine with doing more hunting."

"Thank you."

His father turned toward the den. "I'll let Palebird know. You can have the rabbit before you leave."

Tallstar's chest felt like it was swelling with gratitude. "I appreciate it."

The tom tried settling down for the meal, but excited anticipation buzzed through his body. Tallstar had visited Jake before, but not for almost two full seasons. With four perpetually tiny mouths to feed, he always found himself too busy to tear himself away from his family's den. But newleaf had fallen upon StarClan, and the moor's already abundant supply of prey had only grown in the warmer weather. He could already envision countless future visits while the climate remained bountiful.

Tallstar finished off his rabbit in just a few rapid bites and hurriedly buried its remains off to the side. With a full belly and the whole day ahead of him, he set out for the moor. The expansive fields stretched out endlessly before him, eventually touching the horizon far into the distance. To find Jake, he'd have to leave the StarClan territory altogether. It would be a long journey; one that would take him the better part of the morning. The tom cast one last long look back at the camp before swinging around and exploding into a sprint.

He steered his run toward the rising sun and continued until his legs nearly gave out, stopping only to take brief drinks from scattered puddles or small streams. The moor eventually gave way to sparse trees, then a lush forest. Tallstar slowed his run to a trot and kept his senses alert as he crossed the border into unmapped territory. The tom pushed onward until a fairly recognizable fence appeared in his path. Beyond the fence, the rigid structures of Twoleg dwellings stood. Whether the nests were occupied by the strange creatures, Tallstar didn't know. The afterlife was interesting like that. But even if they did exist in this land, Tallstar was fairly certain that they'd leave him be.

The former leader strode parallel to the fence, his amber eyes searching for a very specific garden. After what felt like moons of walking, the scent of a familiar cat wafted to his nose. He eagerly perked up his ears as a bright ginger tom shifted into view.

Jake was sitting on his usual perch on the fence. He appeared to be surveying the trees ahead, and his gaze brightened when he spotted the leader approaching him.

"Tallstar!" His voice was nothing short of joyous.

Tallstar purred. "Hello, Jake!"

"I was wondering when I'd be seeing you next," the tom mewed as Tallstar bundled his muscles to leap up and join Jake at his side.

"Apologies," he replied, "it's been difficult to get away until recently."

Jake nodded. "Of course, with all of your mother's kits."

Tallstar huffed a wry breath. "Even in StarClan, there's hunting to be done."

Their conversation fell silent few a few heartbeats. Tallstar's tail-tip twitched as a hush seemed to settle over the forest. He began to fear that with their time apart, there wouldn't be much to talk about. But his worries immediately dissipated when Jake spoke up a few moments later.

"How's Sandgorse? It must be nice to spend your days with him after you were so set on avenging him."

"He's well," the black-and-white cat answered, "but busy."

"Ah, yes."

When the discussion calmed once more, Tallstar decided that it was his turn to break the ice.

"I know I've said this before, but I am truly grateful for your companionship in the past life."

A little forward, yes, but it was the afterlife! What did he have to lose?

"And I've told you before, it was all my pleasure."

Tallstar shook his head, refusing to drop it. "If not for you changing my mind, I might've gone through with killing Sparrow," he paused. "I might've gone to the Dark Forest for it."

"But you didn't," Jake returned with a purr. "That's all that matters."

Tallstar shifted on the fence, trying to find a comfortable spot. His companion seemed to notice and scooted to the side a tail-length to reveal a patch of smoother wood. The former leader slid into it thankfully, acutely aware of how his pelt brushed against Jake's.

"Do you watch over them all?" He asked suddenly.

Jake flashed him a confused look. "Hmm?"

"Your kits."

"Yes, I do," he responded. "They've all made a lot of choices—some better than others—but I love and will watch over all of them until they join us here in their next life."

Tallstar assumed that he was referring to Ruby and Socks, and later Scourge, when he spoke about poor decisions. However, there was another kit of Jake's that he wanted to mention.

"You know, when I first met Firestar, I immediately knew that he was your son."

Jake twitched his whiskers. "Really? Well, we do look alike."

It was true. Firestar was nearly a spitting image of his father.

"But not just that. You both have the same..." he briefly searched for the right word, "spirit."

"What do you mean?"

"Friendly. Curious," he answered, inadvertently brushing his tail against Jake's. "Adventurous."

The ginger tom made no move to pull his tail away. "Yes, I have always noticed that."

Tallstar unconsciously leaned into him a little more, basking in the warmth of the midday sun. With a satisfied exhale, he murmured, "I hope he never changes."

~ ~ ~

Written by Feather
Edited by Jackal

7. Ivypool x Hollyleaf

I'm her friend.

Ivypool knew that Hollyleaf valued their friendship immensely. She did, too. There was no reason not to. They shared similarities that little other cats shared. Cast out from a family that cared more about prophecies than cats, the two suffered the same fate.

Forgotten sister.

She knew she was luckier, though. Ivypool had a mate, a family, some kits, even if that hadn't exactly been her plan. Dark blue eyes drifting up and fighting past the tree's branches that easily got in her way, she focused on a star high above her own skull and curled her tail over her paws with a small sigh.

It was lonely sometimes.

Nobody seemed to 'get it'. They all *said* they understood, they all *said* they felt what she felt, but she knew they didn't. If one didn't experience it, she knew that they couldn't feel it.

"I understand," one would murmur quietly as they pressed against her side comfortingly.

"It's okay," the other would reassure, offering a small and bright smile.

"That's fine... it's normal," another would comment with a happy nudge.

And from there, they'd all turn away and insist on hunting. Or perhaps they'd insist that they share a piece of prey instead. Almost all of them, though, would turn and persist that they do something else. Something else to get away from the lingering thoughts of her family.

Only a few would try to keep on speaking about it. Really, she

didn't want to do that. She wanted to move on as best she could. Every single time that someone brought it up, she immediately wanted to regret telling anyone at all. Nobody could understand as Hollyleaf could. A burst of light immediately filled her and she lowered her head, now staring at her paws.

It was dark at her paws. The sky above was dark from the night's arrival, and the stars only could offer so much light to the she-cat. The moon was little help; concealed by the leaves and branches of ThunderClan's trees, only the smallest bits of light could skimp by. Shadows crisscrossed her figure, darkly glaring down on the light that now patterned within her blue eyes.

Fernsong tried to understand. Her mate was one of the cats who tried his best and sometimes he managed to get a few bits of information out of the she-cat. But still, even for him, it seemed impossible. Ivypool knew he was willing to try and help. That was simply his nature. Though, sometimes, it wasn't about the help.

It was about understanding. It always went back to understanding, and the only cat who seemed to be able to understand was, well... Hollyleaf.

Rising abruptly to her paws, Ivypool looked around her, dark blue eyes sharp and flashing. Being the camp guard was boring, and it made her think too much. *Where's Eaglewing?*

The ginger-patterned she-cat had been around earlier, and she had even offered to help guard camp. *I don't want to guard camp anymore. Where is she?* Quickly slipping into the camp, Ivypool scented the air and found that her scent was nowhere to be found. Regret filled her, and she absently hissed, tail lashing. *I should've taken her offer.*

"Ivypool?"

A sturdily built she-cat stepped out from the warrior's den, and her black-and-ginger pelt seemed to instantly absorb the moon's light from above. Her amber eyes narrowed but they were still filled with mild curiosity, flecked with interest.

"Plumstone?" Ivypool questioned, stepping back. *This isn't Eaglewing, but it* is *her sister.*

"Eaglewing told me that you were feeling restless and wanted to go and hunt," the she-cat explained as she padded closer. "I could take your spot if you wanted me to. Eaglewing said she was planning on it, but she got a little tired." She laughed a little before quieting herself.

A large wave of relief crashed upon Ivypool. "Yes, that'd be wonderful."

"Perfect!" The broad-shouldered she-cat dipped her head before taking a position at the entrance of the camp, tail curling around her broad paws. "Have a nice trip."

"Thank you," she murmured, head dipping in a polite nod before she took off.

Running hadn't always been something she enjoyed, and it was especially, well, strange when she was running through a dark forest. Consequently, ThunderClan territory held dark trees, crisscrossed by shadows that seemed to jump and twitch as she ran past. Memories sprung up within her head.

One word, rather name, pressed tightly at her lips and tightly at her mind. She tried her best to forget it at times but it would never truly leave. His scent and his blood always swirled around at her paws and his eyes would never leave her memories. She saw no world in which she'd ever forget—

Antpelt.

She pushed it down. It wasn't relevant, not anymore. Harshly closing her eyes, she found that pictures and images danced on the inside of her eyes, and she immediately opened her eyes. In a flash, she saw the large, smooth rock ahead of her, and the very next moment she was on the ground.

Lifting a paw, she pressed it harshly against her skull with a huff. Tears blurred at the edges of her gaze as she curled up, trying her

hardest not to cry. *Just go hunting. It'll be fine.* She thought it would help but really it only made it worse.

Yet, a small noise nearby startled her.

"Hello?" She managed, clearing her throat before she repeated in a more serious tone, "Hello? Who's there?"

Silence surrounded her once more, and she lifted her skull from the spot upon her paws. Pulling herself into an upright position, the silver-and-white tabby's dark blue eyes swept the area. *Who could be here?* She lifted a paw to rub at her gaze as though to get rid of the tears.

Nothing.

Letting her head drift back to her paws, she studied the ground ahead of her. There was nothing more to do than let thoughts continually flood her head. Pain flitted through her skull every few moments but, still, there was nothing she could do. *This didn't even help.*

Yet as she was looking at the ground, she swore she could've seen something flit by.

"Hello? Hello?" She repeated once more, looking up.

A black she-cat with soft fur dotted by stars stood ahead of her. Green eyes were trained upon her own dark blue ones and warmth and happiness instantly sprung up.

"Hollyleaf...!" Ivypool breathed, "What're you doing here? Did StarClan send—?" Ivypool's words were cut off as the she-cat approached carefully, her tail swishing as she sat down in front of the warrior.

Rising to her paws, she quickly shifted to sit in front of the black-furred warrior. "What're you doing here? I miss you, you know...?" Warmth heated up her pelt yet she did her best to continue on without taking notice. "Is StarClan okay?"

"I miss you," Hollyleaf murmured, and her voice was a melody of

which easily seemed to entrance the ThunderClan warrior. It was soft and sweet, it was carefully crafted honey, pleasant and smooth to any listener.

"I miss you too," Ivypool answered, and Hollyleaf smiled for a moment. Ivypool knew they both could feel it; there were swirls of happiness around both of them, ribbons of lightheartedness, streamers tinted by vivacity... The StarClan she-cat leaned forward and gently touched her nose to the she-cat's cheek.

And with that, she was gone.

"Hollyleaf...?"

The StarClanner disappeared as soon as she had appeared and Ivypool sprung to her paws. A call left her maw as she sprung forward with her legs outstretched, as though expecting to ram straight into the she-cat, but she wasn't there. She and her soft, starry pelt were gone. She and her truly green eyes were gone.

Ivypool's muzzle easily creased and a frown surfaced. She laid back down, allowing her head to lay back down on her paws. Now it was quiet again. There was no blood rushing through her ears, there were no words of a StarClan cat, there was... nothing. Only the scuffles of nighttime prey and the wind.

But as she seemed to slip into slumber, a green-eyed, starry figure twirled down from the skies and curled around her. And in some world, Ivypool knew this and fell asleep with no troubles.

8. Darkstripe X Tigerstar

Surely, he wouldn't lose this fight.

BloodClan only had that mere cat as their leader. Not even the size of an apprentice but wore fancy items such as a disgraceful kittypet collar. Even if Scourge fitted the item with the teeth belonging to savage dogs, it didn't mean he had earned them himself. When he had first seen this tiny cat, Darkstripe had almost snorted at the feeble cat, questioning how a tiny cat like him could stand on his own feet without getting thrashed around by the raging winds. However, Tigerstar told him that he wasn't to be questioned.

Standing in line with cats just like him, bloody and battle-hungry, Darkstripe couldn't have been happier. Granted, the cats that called themselves BloodClan stayed near Scourge, always ready to follow him. Tigerstar had placed his entire trust in the apprentice-sized cat where he hadn't placed a single ounce of it in him moons ago. He tried not to let that bother him, but knowing how *easily* the thick-furred tom had trusted the black cat made every nerve and cell in him boil.

Why couldn't it have been *him* that the all-mighty Tigerstar trusted at first glance?

Why was it this tiny cat who thought he was strong just because fangs stuck out of that collar? Collars were supposed to be the mark of a lowly kittypet, those fat and lazy cats barely lifting a single paw to serve themselves. Was it because of that cold, leafbare's look always remaining in Scourge's eyes? Even when the tom watched cats battle and kill just for a sport, there would always be that bored expression, shedding no light of enjoyment or dissatisfaction. Darkstripe swallowed the rage down his throat, keeping his fur flat as Tigerstar proclaimed his visions and beliefs to those disgusting Clan cats.

By the way Tigerstar seemed so intrigued by this tiny cat, he thought the powerful tom was going to find himself some kind of

collar to attach objects that glorified him even more. Darkstripe was thankful that that never happened, glad that his leader didn't stoop as low as the black cat standing behind him. Being near that cat always gave him an uneasy sense, but he didn't speak up.

Then again, Tigerstar had always treated him like a pawn. Every time he'd try and talk with him, there would always be something else going on, something that made his entire existence a mere annoyance. But the feeling he got when he fought beside him always gave him some kind of extra confidence, maybe even more power. Each blow that they took, Darkstripe would feel the corresponding part of his own body take the blow that the brown warrior had suffered.

Seeing him fall to due exhaustion or injuries seemed to be more than enough herbs for him to recover. Acting as a loyal bodyguard, hoping Tigerstar would notice some of his efforts, Darkstripe defended him with every ounce of strength left in his worn-out body. After the wounds were dried and scarred over, he'd always try to slip over and ask how he was.

Multiple times, there was a certain she-cat in the way, the one who seemed to drag the sharp-eyed cat's attention away by the tail. Other times, he'd just shove him aside and do his own thing, contemplate the things in his mind to himself. Times when there were three of them, him, Tigerstar, and Longtail, he did value - after all, it was time with him after all. The arrogant, long-legged tom could disappear into the background for all he cared.

There were days that he worried Tigerstar forgot all about him.

Just another pawn to use for his goals. Another cat that could go into battle whenever he gave the orders, giving his life just to get another step closer to this grand dream. A cat that was fighting with every single thing left in him as if he had nothing else to fight for. A cat that wouldn't question motives and would sit quietly, bow their head, and unsheath their claws at foes.

He *wasn't* one of those cats, no matter how much he told himself.

Darkstripe was different than the other mindless cats that followed

at those pretty words of power, greed, corruption, and dominance. He wasn't just fighting for new territory or a status that would carry him to the top, sitting upon a pile of corpses of all the cats he despised. There was something else in him that gave him a reason to wake up and work harder, promising that one day, his efforts would pay off. Comparing him to another subject of brainless cats was one of the worst ways to describe him.

No, *he* was fighting for something more.

He was fighting for a chance.

He was fighting just to even *be* with Tigerstar.

Yes, that was the reason. Each night was filled with hopeless dreams that Tigerstar would suddenly realize that he was an important part of his master plan. But is that what he truly wanted? No - the Tigerstar he knew would acknowledge him and his efforts, but he'd never truly admit what he was feeling. Even for a pretty she-cat like Goldenflower, he knew that honest and genuine feelings were hard to come across with a cat like him.

And that was why he felt such admiration for the brave warrior.

Every fight gave him mixed feelings of power surging through his veins, making his blood run faster, claws grow sharper, and paws move quicker than ever. Yes, knowing that a warrior as great as Tigerstar was with him, on his side of the fight, was more than enough to tell him that he was on the winning side. It was like fate had pulled him to his side anytime a battle raged on, determined to protect him at all costs.

And the battle in front of him would give him more of that indescribable feeling. If it didn't, then it wasn't the fact Tigerstar didn't fight with all his strength backing him up like a raging storm, it was those pathetic Clan cats who thought they could stand against a force like them. With cats on their side, cats that they didn't know all of their tactics and skills, the battle was already won before they even touched a single paw onto the field.

Scourge hadn't said a single word the entire time Tigerstar had

declared war on the Clans, silently watching him with that gleam in his eyes. Darkstripe curled his lips into a snarl, wanting to lash out at the tom for not paying attention. Then again, the muscular tom next to the tiny cat was like a leech, sticking around, but seeming to suck out all the strength and power that his leader might have. It'd cause every part of him to snarl and snap if this kit fell before the first wave, neck snapped like a twig or claws scoring his underbelly, making a nice, clean, lethal cut.

Darkstripe let the rage settle down bit by bit, figuring that wasting his energy on a kit that would only need a simple strike across the neck would drain away his strength. He needed that to fight alongside Tigerstar and having it all piled on Scourge before the single for attack even came would be the downfall of him. Besides, there were a few cats in the Clans he had wanted to settle some scores with. Fighting all of them at once would satisfy him, but staying near his leader was more important.

Then, *then* his efforts would be worthwhile. Then, everything he worked for would pay off in the end. Tigerstar would *finally* see his strength if he were the one to bring down the main source of his rage. That fake leader, the one that had the audacity to call himself a leader of a Clan that had fallen the moment an old she-cat had banished the only true warrior in the ranks. Darkstripe tightened himself, ready for the battle to begin.

With BloodClan with them, there wouldn't be any kind of failure, and Tigerstar was ready to fight.

Surely, he wouldn't lose this battle.

Written by Solstice
Edited by Bright

9. Jayfeather X Kestrelflight

There was always black.

Nothing more than a simple splash of black.

When the sun shone its brightest, there was only black.

Never once was there a single trace of color, they call it. Granted, sometimes he'd feel things around him, like the strength of his brother who blazed through battles with the roar and power of a grand lion, or times when he felt his sister race through the forest, proudly showing off her skills anytime she leapt off a branch or sprang from above on an escaping bird. Other times, he could sense emotions just by standing near cats, like his mother, sensing all of that pain, sorrow, and regret each time she looked at him and his siblings, or the harsh demeanor his so-called father always had.

Then there were times he could smell the world and pick up the faintest of scents. Such as when he heard the cry of an orange warrior fall straight through the frozen lake that made his fur tingle. The smell of snow, ice, water flooding in, chasing away any kind of oxygen left in his lungs, and then, eventually the smell of a limp corpse that forever floated in ice water. Hearing was never his specialty since there was a keen, little she-cat that could easily pick up the smallest of movements, but there were times when it came into play that he rather enjoyed it. Playing that small prank to bring back an old belief to a group of ShadowClan cats was fun, and then hearing the wise voice of two elders, possibly leaders, made it worthwhile.

But there wasn't any kind of light.

A ray of sunlight just felt warm on his pelt. Darkness felt just like the cold air during leafbare. Even if he could sense a wide smile splitting a white she-cat's, face just at the mere sight of him, he'd never get to see what she looked like. The shine in her eyes or the hope that flared through them when he told her a destiny. Everything he saw was just black, but then there were times when he could open his blind eyes and see the starry forest of StarClan.

He should've been glad to be able to see what a green forest was like, or what the rushing waters of a stream looked like when cats hunted, but there were also horrors that hid behind the black cloud. Cats rose to the top by killing others in their way, walking on a path of corpses as they paraded around the darkened forest, just waiting for another innocent cat to fall victim to their claws. He shouldn't have been all that surprised that there was an equal amount of horrors and secrets in the living world. The dead and living were the same thing, separated only by the fact that the dead were somewhere else; that's what he figured and claimed, at least.

When he returned to the world in darkness, days ticked on ever so slowly. What seemed like hours were only mere seconds. Jayfeather thought he'd never last very long as he walked around, picking up the sounds of the forest and clanmates to create the map in his head. It got easier as life carried on, but there was a certain cat that made the world light up in color. Even when he was wide awake and looking through cloudy eyes, that single cat threw shades and vibrant colors at him, showing him a world that lies behind the black cloud.

And that very tom was sitting next to him, his pelt rising with each breath. It was music to his ears, playing louder than the thunderstorms that ruled the night. Kestrelfight was picking at something between his paws, and Jayfeather concentrated, using his hearing to figure out what the plant was.

No, wait, he thought, letting out a snort. *That's just a pebble.*

"Figure it out already?" Kestrelflight laughed, dropping the stone near his paw. "I was starting to wonder if you were just messing

with me."

"I'm offended that a pebble seemed more interesting then what we came here to talk about," he responded, hoping to strike up a conversation with the tom. The pelt shifted and then there was a warm head pressed against his shoulder. Jayfeather fought every nerve in him to stay down and not explode, unlike the rhythmic beat of his heart. Kestrelflight didn't seem to mind one bit, as the tom simply accepted the song as the two toms looked into the horizon - well, it was more like only one could stare into the sun.

"Well . . ." Kestrelflight murmured, shuffling in his paws. "We've already shared information about our current Clans and their wellbeing. What else exactly are you hoping to discuss?"

"Memories," he answered. "Remember when I had to run around this place just to gather up all of the medicine cats, because all of you decided to abandon your faith in StarClan?" Jayfeather could still remember their faces clearly, even if he wasn't able to picture them. Then the relief that they all agreed to help him get the Clans to rise together to fend off the Dark Forest. Even in a time of peril, he couldn't deny the fact that his paws tingled, or the fact that he was the one who gathered them together.

Possibly, there was another reason he was happy to have gathered all the medicine cats together, but he didn't ponder about it too often. Those desires only came up when he was beside Kestrelflight, and only Kestrelflight.

There was a good chance he didn't feel anything when the others were around because they were there. However, they didn't notice a single thing, and focused all of their energy and time on the danger that faced them. After the war ended, Jayfeather could finally sort out his business and thoughts alone and privately.

He was thankful that the ability to wander through anycat's thoughts and dreams had disappeared, even if it meant he could no longer escape to that private world. There were days when he'd find himself wondering what it would be like to wander through another mind or dream, walking in the pawsteps of the past, seeing it unravel itself before his own blind eyes, having the answers to frays

that had gone unanswered. That was a place where he could be himself, but it always backfired when the cat noticed him and questioned what he was doing, which he was forced to come up with a lame excuse as to why he snooped around.

If there was one cat that he wanted to wander through their thoughts, it was none other than the cat beside him. The WindClan medicine cat that brought color to the dark world when he was fully awake. Jayfeather couldn't recall any other cat able to bring those hues to him like the tom; even Half Moon couldn't use her sweet voice to show him a world of unimaginable love and color.

"I remember," Kestrelflight responded, startling his thoughts. "I thought you were crazy at first, but then I let myself believe you. You never were a bad cat to me, despite all those things said about Flameclaw's murder."

"Thank you..." Jayfeather felt the words tumble out of his mouth unintentionally. "Really, thank you, Kestrelflight."

"Where's this coming from?" He felt his pelt shift and a heavy head rested on his shoulder, breathing in his ThunderClan scent. "Is it for telling you that the kits are doing better after you gave me that patch of herbs?"

"No," he answered, turning his head to face Kestrelfight. He wasn't sure he was locking eyes with the medicine cat, but he felt that the tom's gaze on him, like a warm sun. For a fleeting moment, Jayfeather thought he could see the faint image of the tom, the white splotches of fur that painted him like a bird's feathers, the black pelt of the night that reminded him of his lost sister that dwelled among the clouds, and the green eyes that awaited his reaction.

Then it was gone.

And Jayfeather was thrust back into a dark world again.

But this time, he didn't feel regret or anger. Emotions that rarely showed themselves rose to the surface, causing him to tremble and fight to keep his face straight. Slight giggles and snorts erupted

from the other tom, making him even more of a mess. Jayfeather shook his head back and forth, letting out an annoyed growl which sent Kestrelflight into a series of laughter.

"Come on, what's gotten into you? Did you lose your stick?" joked Kestrelflight, extending a paw.

"No!" Jayfeather hissed, lashing his tail, hoping that it wouldn't scare him away. The tom hesitated, then set his paw back to the ground, curling his own spotted tail around his front paws. "It's just . . . you were there when I gathered all of the medicine cats together."

"Yeah . . . ? The others were there, too---"

"You spoke to me when we were apprentices and were toleratable, even when you were annoying and asked what it was like being blind."

"Hey, I was just an appren---"

"And you . . ." Jayfeather hesitated, heart exploding. "You continue to talk to me and I don't know . . . Just being around you makes things fade away like they never existed. I know my family would give me strange looks but I don't care anymore . . . You're . . ."

"Jayfeather---"

"Just . . . thank you for being in my life!"

"I can't control if I'm born or not---"

"And . . ." Jayfeather took a deep sigh, wishing that StarClan would allow him to see the tom. Even if it lasted a second, it was more than enough. If he could see Kestrelflight and that flustered look on his face before he went back to his lonely den, that would be enough. There had to be some kind of luck for him, to see the tom that was wise and brave, able to stand against his own leader when times called it. He prayed to the clouds for that chance to happen.

There had to be a chance to see him again and to see everything that Kestrelflight brought with him, no matter how blinding and

painful some colors and lights were. Yes, there had to be a way to spend a few extra minutes with him, and only him.

"And what?" Kestrelflight whispered, leaning closer. "What's going on?"

"Thank you, for bringing color into my blind world."

Written by Solstice
Edited by Mack

10. Ashfur x Hawkfrost

"Fox-dung!" Ashfur muttered under his breath, slightly beginning to panic. "For StarClan's sake, where is he?"

The gray-furred tom glared towards RiverClan's territory, waiting for a flash of brown fur or the gleam of pale icy-blue eyes to signify Hawkfrost's arrival. They had agreed to meet at moonhigh, however the moon was already starting to sink and so far there was no sign of the burly tom.

Ashfur's mind calmed as he listened to the quiet babble of the lake, cool water lapping over his paws. *Firestar only has five lives left,* he thought. *I hope this death will be the most painful.* Ashfur didn't have anything against Firestar himself- he was a good, righteous leader. However, as Squirrelflight's father, he was also one of the cats that she cared about the most. Sacrifices had to be made to punish that insolent she-cat, to have her suffer for her actions.

Squirrelflight. The mere thought of the ginger she-cat made Ashfur curl his lip in disgust. Her stubborn attitude, her impulsiveness, the way she rejected him, a perfectly good cat, for Brambleclaw– he hated it all. A growl rose in Ashfur's throat, but he forced it back down. Tonight, Squirrelflight would pay for what she had done.

The snap of a branch brought Ashfur back to the present. He jumped, and flattened his ears, letting out a quiet hiss. "Who's there?"

A large, well-muscled cat stepped into view. Ashfur couldn't help but gaze in admiration at him, the sight of this tom briefly chasing away thoughts of Squirrelflight from his mind. The glossy sheen of his perfectly-groomed, dark brown fur was stunning, and the moonlight gave him an otherworldly glow like what Ashfur imagined StarClan cats must have. His cold blue gaze pierced through the darkness, meeting Ashfur's, causing the pale gray tom's heartbeat to quicken involuntarily.

"Ashfur, it's just me." Hawkfrost rumbled. His eyes gleamed with amusement.

"What took you so long?" growled Ashfur. "We agreed to meet at moonhigh!"

"Took some time for my Clanmates to fall asleep." Hawkfrost shrugged. "Well, it doesn't matter, at least I'm here now. Lead me to the fox trap."

"Alright."

The two toms padded into the forest in comfortable silence, Ashfur taking the lead. *Hawkfrost is so... calm and so smart.* Ashfur thought. *He's the only one who understands and accepts me. If only we could- no, what are you thinking, Ashfur? Surely he wouldn't like a cat like you... right?*

As they approached the fox trap, Ashfur drew to a halt. "Hawkfrost, I..."

Hawkfrost paced forward to stand next to Ashfur. "Are you nervous?" The tabby tom's breath was warm on the smaller cat's fur. "It's alright, there's no need to worry. I've got everything under control."

Ashfur stiffened, his pelt growing hot. "No, I... I just wanted to say..." His voice trailed off. What if Hawkfrost laughed at him? What if he hated him for it?

Hawkfrost's bushy tail brushed across Ashfur's spine. "I'm here for you, whatever it is."

Does he feel the same way about me? Ashfur wondered, returning Hawkfrost's warm gaze. *Maybe...*

Ashfur tentatively stepped back, not taking his eyes off the suave RiverClan cat. "I... I suppose you have to set up the trap now, right?"

"Yeah. You go tell Firestar that Blackstar wants to see him over here while I set the trap up." Hawkfrost hesitated, clearly wanting to say

something else. Then he shook his head ever so slightly and suddenly broke into a purr. "Come back soon, Ashfur!"

Ashfur smiled and nodded happily, then turned away and broke into a run as he headed towards the ThunderClan camp. *Perhaps we could be together after all...*

Written by Bright
Edited by Talon

11. Dovewing x Briarlight

Dovewing trotted through the forest, two plump squirrels swinging from her jaws. She nimbly threaded her way through the bushes that filled her Clan's territory, emerging in a sunny clearing ringed with trees that wasn't too far from camp. In the center of the clearing, a lone flower grew.

The flower had a large head of tiny petals, ringing each other in tight, neat little layers. The bright yellow colors it contained shone like the sun, throwing vibrancy back into the area around the plant. It almost seemed like there was an aura of light surrounding the area. These luster-filled, golden petals caught Dovewing's eye, and she quickly bounded over to the plant.

This is perfect! She thought, a purr unconsciously rising up from her throat. *I bet this flower will totally brighten up her day!* The soft gray she-cat nipped the base of the stem, then gently picked up the flower. Dovewing's journey home was significantly slower, since she walked slowly through the forest in order to keep her gift from being damaged.

As the warrior headed into camp, she was heralded by her Clanmates, who all called out various variations of, "Hey, Dovewing!" Dovewing cheerily dipped her head towards them all, meowing muffled greetings in return through her precious cargo. She moved over to the prey pile, and gently placed her catches on the top. Dovewing then turned her attention to the medicine den. She took a deep breath in order to steady herself, then padded over.

Dovewing poked her head into the den, praying to StarClan Jayfeather wouldn't be inside. Thankfully, there was only one cat within it, the one she had desperately been hoping to see.

Briarlight was propped up next to the herb store, seemingly engrossed in her task of checking over the precious plants. Dovewing couldn't help but take a moment to admire the she-cat's sleek, shining brown fur, which had a sheen that the lake

sometimes gained during sun-high. And when Dovewing cleared her throat and Briarlight glanced behind her shoulder, Dovewing was reminded of the lake again, when she stared into the deep blue depths of the other she-cat's gaze. "Uh, hi, Briarlight." Dovewing said, smiling awkwardly around the flower she was still carefully holding. "I just wanted to come in and see how you were doing?" The fluffy gray she-cat's voice nervously echoed through the den, but one smile from Briarlight was enough to put Dovewing at ease.

"Thanks, that's really sweet of you." The brown she-cat meowed in response, a hint of gratitude filling her tone. "Jayfeather left this morning to check on the catmint garden at the abandoned Twoleg den, and I haven't seen anyone else all day." Dovewing offered some murmurs of sympathy, as she headed over and sat down next to Briarlight, who had settled down so she was lying on the ground. She carefully laid the bright flower between the two of them, absentmindedly stroking the petals with one outstretched cloud-colored paw to get a speck of dust off.

Dovewing glanced down at Briarlight, asking, "So, has Jayfeather came up with any new exercises lately? You told me that the pebble one was getting sort of repetitive." Her companion nodded along, saying, "Yeah, it was. Actually, it would be great if you could do moss-ball with me, I haven't exercised yet today." Briarlight glanced up at Dovewing hopefully, who agreed right away. "Of course! But, I'd like to give you this first." She pushed the luminous flower towards Briarlight, whose gaze lit up. "I thought you'd like it." Dovewing meowed almost sheepishly, heat rushing to her face as Briarlight's own visage was filled with delight.

"Marigold! Thank goodness! We were running low." Briarlight happily meowed, "And here I was thinking you wanted to ask me whether Bumblestripe would like it." She pulled the flower closer to her, examining it with almost a hint of wonder. "I've never seen a marigold this bright before though, it's amazing!"

Dovewing felt beyond embarrassed. "Uh, Briarlight, I didn't mean for it to be for the stores." She meowed. Briarlight looked up at Dovewing in confusion, her head slightly tilted to one side. *Too late to turn back now!* Dovewing thought desperately, meeting Briarlight's gaze and replying in the steadiest, most confident voice

she could muster, "Briarlight, I wanted *you* to have the marigold. Because... I really like you." Dovewing hung her head, hardly believing she had just confessed. Briarlight was definitely going to reject her, she just knew it.

"Oh!" Briarlight's surprised tones rang in the air, and when Dovewing glanced back at her, she saw that Briarlight was beaming beautifully, almost overflowing with joy. "Dovewing, you have no idea how happy that makes me." The brown she-cat meowed happily. Confidence suddenly filled Dovewing, and she moved closer to Briarlight. As the two she-cats cuddled together, Dovewing intertwined her tail with Briarlight's lifeless one.

Written by Talon
Edited by Mack